

Farmers Market Promotion Program
Final Performance Report
For the Period of October 1, 2012 – March 31, 2015

Date: *June 29, 2015*

Recipient Name: *Brick City Development Corporation*

Project Title: Expanding Farmers' Market Opportunities and Sales in Newark by Encouraging Federal Nutrition Benefits Clients to Shop at *Real Food Nourishing Newark (RFNN)* Markets

Grant Number: *12-25-G-1602*

Project Location: *Newark, NJ*

Amount Awarded: *\$89,521*

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Goals and Objectives:

- A. Expanding the economic viability of our farmers' market through a cohesive, high visibility marketing campaign, particularly targeting new customers participating in the federal food assistance programs, as well as coordinated support for additional locations and frequency of markets.
- B. Positively impact the physical, economic, social, and environmental health for Newarkers by creating linkages between the market and the existing components of the city's food system that currently lack an effective infrastructure for food distribution, education, and resource sharing.

Activities:

Increased SNAP redemption sales by facilitating purchase of EBT equipment and educating vendors about the benefits of tapping into markets associated with SNAP and WIC redemption.

Developed and promoted a brand - Nourishing Newark – that increased awareness and participation among seniors throughout the city about the farmers' markets and the Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP)

Became an authorized distributor of SFMNP checks

Documented increase in sales revenue for farmers associated with promotion of SFMNP to seniors

Encouraged additional foot traffic through cable television commercial with the new mayor of the city in August, 2014, leading to increases in farmers and vendors sales

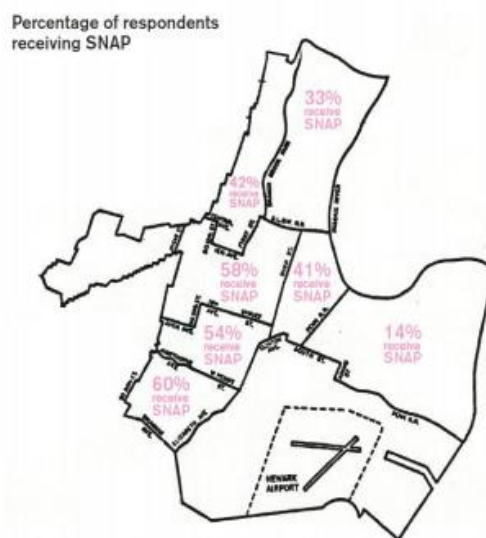
Accomplishments:

- 1) Farmers Markets all began accepting SNAP using EBT technology.

- 2) The program managers arranged for a new farmer to take over at a failing market and facilitated his success, helping him earn \$10,100 in one month of sales.
- 3) Visibility of tent at the markets, wide distribution of well-designed promotional fliers at public events, and public access tv commercial raised awareness about the presence and appeal of farmers' markets and helped drive increase foot traffic.
- 4) Website for Nourishing Newark served as an important resource for the community:
<http://farmersmarketsnewark.org/>.
- 5) Awareness of the fact that farmers' markets accepted SNAP increased substantially over the season following intense promotion: In August, only 37% were aware that these benefits could be used. In October, only 37% were not aware of this fact.
- 6) Sales increased in 2014 relative to 2013 due to promotion.

Beneficiaries:

- 1) The markets are located primarily in the downtown area and are available to residents and commuters alike. Surveys taken at the markets included 314 individuals, 54% of whom resided in Newark. Forty-two percent of those surveyed receive at least one federal nutritional benefit such as SNAP or WIC. Of those surveyed that lived in Newark, the following graphic describes their use of SNAP by location within the city:



- 2) Based on the survey, project managers concluded that shoppers who visit the market weekly are female, between the ages of 46 and 59, and identify themselves as African-American/black.
- 3) Market farmers reported an increase in sales of \$300 on days when seniors were encouraged to shop using Senior Farmers Market Vouchers

Lessons Learned:

- 1)** It is important to be able to demonstrate the business case to farmers for working in a market like Newark, particularly the market opportunity represented by customers using federal nutrition supports
- 2)** Residents appreciate clear, detailed information about the schedule of farmers markets. Most focused on one market and did not know about others. Targeted marketing in certain neighborhoods may be helpful.
- 3)** Once a schedule has been published, it is very important that market organizers adhere to it. On several occasions, market organizers changed their times or closed early due to concerns about the weather. This may have been confusing for certain customers.
- 4)** Survey work is important to ground programs promoting fresh food accessibility in data. The common perception in Newark was that the downtown markets primarily served middle- and upper-income commuters who did not live in town. Survey results show just the opposite and the publication of those results helped counter that perception.
- 5)** Professional communication (website, well-designed fliers, etc.) is extremely important.
- 6)** Strategies for helping market organizers learn from each other are very helpful, especially exposing them to very successful markets in other jurisdictions.
- 7)** It is important to institutionalize programs such as this within a multi-sector coalition, so that changes of local government do not disrupt efforts to expand access to affordable, nourishing food for low-income city residents.